



Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program

Murals Grant Program Guidelines



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program (Program). The program supports the revitalization and transformation of the downtown into a safe and welcoming place where people want to spend time. The Program offers grants to eligible buildings to help improve exteriors (façades), interiors, and the surrounding premises areas (lands), and to install murals to create interest.

These guidelines include information on eligible projects, application details, and program requirements. Anyone interested in applying for a grant is strongly encouraged to book a pre-application meeting. Program staff will be able to help you navigate the application process, ensure projects are eligible, and answer any questions. To book a pre-application meeting, please contact Pulse (780.743.7000) or email: incentives@rmwb.ca.

Grant objective

The Murals Grant is intended:

- to enhance the aesthetic appearance of buildings through the installation of murals.

A mural is any painting, mosaic, or graphic art (big and small) which is applied professionally to all or a portion of an exterior wall of a building for the purposes of decoration or artistic expression. Murals may depict a scene or event of natural, social, cultural or historic significance and may be used to celebrate local history, Indigenous heritage and multiculturalism.

Grant value

Funding is provided as a reimbursement grant, which means that Municipality pays 75% of eligible costs to the maximum allowed by the grant. Applicants receive funding after projects are complete and verified by the Municipality.

The following funding is available:

- 75% of costs up to \$30,000 per building. For example, a mural project valued at \$10,000 would be eligible for a grant of \$7,500.



Figure 1: Salvation Army mural project. Artwork by David Thomas.



Project criteria

Applicants should be:

- Property owner or a tenant (with the property owner's permission).

Building should be:

- A commercial, institutional, mixed-use, or apartment building.
- Located in the program area. View the map at rmwb.ca/incentives.

Mural projects must:

- Be completed by a "Locally Involved Artist". This means an artist residing in the Municipality or an artist from outside the Municipality who provides mentorship, skill-building, and capacity-building opportunities to local residents in the field of discipline for which they have been hired.
- Appeal to a diverse audience and be suitable for all ages. Murals that contain offensive content are ineligible (artwork is subject to approval by the Municipality).
- Provide a graffiti-resistant coating to prolong lifespan and reduce maintenance, where necessary.
- Follow Land Use Bylaw regulations where murals incorporate advertising.

Limits on participation:

- Buildings that received a murals grant previously are ineligible.

Eligible and ineligible costs

Eligible costs include:

- Artist fees, design, and installation.
- Travel and accommodation costs, at the discretion of the Municipality.
- Site preparation.
- Professional fees, including project management, design, and engineering, to a maximum of 15% of eligible costs.
- Municipal planning permit fees.
- Direct project labour costs.
- Rental of tools and equipment.
- Goods and Service Tax (GST).

Ineligible costs include:

- Routine maintenance.
- Labour performed by the applicant.
- Purchases of tools and consumables.
- Non-specific costs, profit, insurance, and warranties.
- Costs associated with overruns.
- Scope of work that is already funded by another municipal grant.

Support for your mural project is available

General advice on selecting an artist and commissioning a design is available from the Community Services division. All murals must be installed professionally, including appropriate wall preparation and material selection, to ensure murals last. If you would like advice, please contact public.art@rmwb.ca.



General program requirements

Please review the key terms and conditions of the program as outlined in the Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program council policy (FIN-320): rmwb.ca/incentives.

- Funding is provided on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Applying for a grant does not guarantee approval or that projects can obtain the necessary permits.
- To prevent municipal funds from being used multiple times for the same projects, projects that receive other municipal funding for the same scope of work are no longer eligible for DRIP grants.
- To help keep applications moving forward, program staff may close or withdraw inactive applications after 4 weeks of no communication from the applicant. This ensures funding is directed toward active and ready-to-proceed projects.
- Grants are not retroactive. Costs incurred before applying for a grant and signing an agreement are not eligible. Some exceptions apply:
 - Professional fees related to the project if incurred after January 1, 2024.
 - Municipal planning permit fees (e.g. development permits, building permits, and trade permits).
- If approved, recipients will enter into an agreement with the Municipality that sets out the terms and conditions of participation in the Program.
- **Construction must be completed within 18 months of the date of your agreement.** Requests for additional time must be received before the deadline has passed.
- Applicants may use the contractor(s) of their choice. Applicants are responsible for paying contractors and for verifying business license requirements.
- Please notify program staff if your project changes during construction. Changes must be approved and an amendment to the agreement may be required. Extensions and changes may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The following will be verified at the reimbursement stage:
 - Property taxes are current and paid.
 - Municipal utility bills are current and paid.
 - The applicant is not in a legal dispute with the Municipality.
 - All necessary permits and permissions for the project have been obtained.
- Reimbursement is provided upon the satisfactory completion of the project.



APPLYING AND REIMBURSEMENT

The following section outlines the steps to applying. The program now provides a two-stage approval. A partial application may be accepted before applicants provide pricing. If approved, a conditional approval will be issued, which holds the funding for your project. Applicants will then have 90 days to submit pricing for review and full approval. If your building has received a grant previously, or if you are unsure, please inquire to confirm eligibility.

Step 1. Pre-application meeting

- A pre-application meeting is strongly recommended.
- At the pre-application meeting, a program administrator will review program requirements with you to ensure your project meets the spirit and intent of the Program.

Step 2. Preparing your application

- Prepare and submit the following as part of your application:
 - Completed application form
 - Letter of intent
 - Photos showing the existing conditions
 - Certificate of Title
 - Corporate search for the applicant
 - Corporate search for the property owner (for applications made by tenants)
 - Letter of Authorization (for applications made by tenants)
- Refer to the application form for further details. The application form is available at: rmwb.ca/incentives. A blank letter of intent and letter of authorization are included with the application form.

Step 3. Preliminary review

- Program staff will review your application to confirm it meets basic eligibility requirements and the intent of the program. Proposals may be referred for further internal review.
- Comments may be provided to you for information or to be addressed by your proposal (where a response is required, please respond within four weeks).
- If your project concept is approved, a **conditional approval letter** will be provided to you. The letter will:
 - Provide any comments received on your proposal.
 - Stipulate any conditions that must be met.
 - Identify the documents for you to submit or resubmit.
 - Provide the deadline to fulfill the conditions.
- You will have 90 days to submit the remainder of application documents, including pricing for your project.
- **Please note that applications that remain incomplete after 90 days will be automatically rejected and you need to reapply (subject to program deadlines and funding availability).**



Step 4. Completing your application

- Submit the remaining documents to complete your application.
 - Letter describing the artwork and how the project includes a “Locally Involved Artist”.
 - Proposed design (artwork).
 - Artist’s resume or portfolio.
 - Technical plan.
 - Project budget.
 - Any other information identified in the conditional approval letter.
- Some expenses are not eligible. Please refer to page 4 for eligible and ineligible costs.
- Program staff will review the application information to determine the grant value the project may receive.

Step 5. Funding agreement

- After your project and pricing are approved, a grant agreement (contract) setting out the terms and conditions of participating in the program will be offered.
- **The agreement must be signed by the applicant within 30 calendar days. Please note that agreements that remain unsigned after 30 days will be automatically revoked.**
- Once the agreement is signed by all parties, you may apply for permits (if not already done so) and begin construction.

Step 6. Permits

- Permits must be applied for and approved before construction begins. You are responsible for ensuring all permits are obtained for your project.
- Some projects require permits. Your project may require:
 - Development permit (for murals containing advertising).
 - Building permit (for wall-mounted panels).
- If you are advised that your project does not require a permit, please provide written confirmation from the Municipality.
- For permitting advice, please contact RMWB Planning and Development Services:

Jubilee Building

Main floor, 9909 Franklin Avenue, Fort McMurray

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

current.planning@rmwb.ca

780-743-7000 (Pulse)

Step 7. Reimbursement

- Please contact incentives@rmwb.ca once your project is complete. A copy of the reimbursement application form will be provided.
- All work that requires a building permit must be inspected and the permits must be closed before reimbursement can begin. Partial reimbursement will not be provided.
- Gather your documents and submit a single email to incentives@rmwb.ca with the following:
 - Completed reimbursement application form.



- A letter or email from the applicant confirming that the project is complete and requesting reimbursement.
 - Photos that show the completed project.
 - Invoices and receipts, including proof of payment.
 - Permit numbers or copies of all permits associated with the project.
 - A valid business license number for the operating business (if applicable).
- Program staff may contact you to arrange a site visit to view the improvements.

CONTACT

Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program

Planning and Development Services

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

9909 Franklin Avenue

Fort McMurray, AB, T9H 2K4

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